



Security Council

Fifty-sixth year

Provisional

4279th meeting

Wednesday, 21 February 2001, 10 a.m.

New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Ben Mustapha	(Tunisia)
<i>Members:</i>	Bangladesh	Mr. Amin
	China	Mr. Shen Guofang
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Ireland	Mr. Ryan
	Jamaica	Miss Durrant
	Mali	Mr. Kassé
	Mauritius	Mr. Neewoor
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Singapore	Mr. Mahbubani
	Ukraine	Mr. Kuchynski
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Sixth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization
Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2001/128)

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01-25760 (E)



The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Sixth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2001/128)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I propose to invite the members of the Political Committee for the Implementation of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, as well as Zambia, the representative of the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs of the Organization of African Unity and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo to participate in this meeting.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

In accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency General Assani Tidjani, Special Envoy of the President of Togo, His Excellency Mr. Gnassingbé Eyadema, current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, to take a seat at the Council table.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Tidjani (Togo) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I invite the Minister for External Relations of Angola, His Excellency Mr. João Bernardo de Miranda, to take a seat at the Council table.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Miranda (Angola) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I invite the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, His Excellency Mr. Léonard She Okitundu, to take a seat at the Council table.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. She Okitundu (Democratic Republic of the Congo) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I invite the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Namibia, The Honourable Theo-Ben Gurirab, to take a seat at the Council table.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Gurirab (Namibia) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I invite the Minister in the Office of the President of the Rwandese Republic, The Honourable Patrick Mazimpaka, to take a seat at the Council table.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Mazimpaka (Rwanda) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I invite the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Uganda, The Honourable Alfred Mubanda, to take a seat at the Council table.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Mubanda (Uganda) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I invite the Minister for Presidential Affairs of Zambia, The Honourable Eric Silwamba, to take a seat at the Council table.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Silwamba (Zambia) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I invite the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Zimbabwe, The Honourable Stanislaus I. G. Mudenge, to take a seat at the Council table.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Madenge (Zimbabwe) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Valentine Senga, representative of the Movement for the Liberation of the Congo (MLC) to the Joint Military Commission, to take a seat at the Council table.

I invite Mr. Azarias Ruberwa, Secretary-General of the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD), to take a seat at the Council table.

I invite Professor Pashi-Claver, representative of the Congolese Rally for Democracy-Kisangani (RCD-K), to take a seat at the Council table.

I invite Mr. Saïd Djennit, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs of the Organization of

African Unity (OAU), to take a seat at the Council table.

I invite Mr. Kamel Morjane, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the sixth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), document S/2001/128.

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to the following documents: S/2001/147, letter dated 18 February 2001 from Rwanda; and S/2001/150, letter dated 20 February 2001 from Uganda.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Secretary-General Kofi Annan and express my appreciation for his presence here. I also welcome his submission to the Council of the sixth report of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which contains very important recommendations.

On behalf of the members of the Security Council, I welcome the ministers and members of the Political Committee for the Implementation of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement; the Minister for Presidential Affairs of Zambia; the Minister for National Defense of the Republic of Togo, the representative of the Current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity; the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs of the Organization of African Unity; and Brigadier Njuki Mwaniki, Chairman of the Joint Military Commission. I also welcome Ambassador Kamel Morjane, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and General Diallo, Force Commander of MONUC.

I take this opportunity to pay a tribute to the efforts exerted by the members of MONUC.

Our meeting today is an extension of the dialogue that began early last year between the Security Council

and the parties signatory to the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement. The Security Council's initiative of holding this meeting in the current circumstances affirms its intention of assuming its responsibilities for the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the wider region. We have noted the readiness of the participants in this meeting to proceed with the peace process. Their presence here today is an affirmation of that willingness.

There is a conviction that the current situation in the region is ripe for a new impetus to the peace process. Today's meeting has been convened following a series of very important meetings held in the region and the important and valuable initiatives of many African leaders and the OAU to contribute to the search for a solution to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This meeting is also a part of the ongoing efforts of the United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, to address the conflict. This is a very important and rare opportunity that may never arise again to put into practice the political will to make a decisive start in adopting the necessary practical steps, means and mechanisms to move the peace process forward and to achieve the aspirations of the Congolese people and the peoples of the region as a whole.

In welcoming the progress that has been made in the past few weeks towards respect for the Ceasefire Agreement and the positive initiatives that have been announced, we look forward to a continuation of this commitment; to the genuine implementation of the Security Council's resolutions and the provisions of the Lusaka Agreement and the Kampala and Harare disengagement plans; and to the rapid withdrawal of foreign forces from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in accordance with resolution 1304 (2000).

The members of the Council welcome the readiness of the Congolese authorities to implement the inter-Congolese dialogue with its facilitator, Sir Ketumile Masire. We encourage all the Congolese parties to cooperate in achieving the success of this process in the interests of the Congolese people.

MONUC's deployment in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been delayed, to the disappointment of many. The United Nations is now preparing to implement this deployment. We call on all parties fully to cooperate in the deployment of

MONUC and to safeguard the security, safety and freedom of movement of United Nations and related personnel.

We have followed with extreme concern the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo during the lengthy struggle and conflict, and we would like to affirm the urgent need to provide humanitarian assistance to the Congolese people.

Today's meeting is of great importance to the war-stricken Congolese people, who aspire to the restoration of the country's full sovereignty and territorial integrity and to complete reconciliation between its inhabitants, and to the peoples of the Great Lakes region, whose goal is to live in peace and security and to continue with the development of the region.

Our meeting today is the focus of attention for the African continent and the people of the world. An end must be put to the volatility and conflicts that have plagued the Great Lakes region and that threaten peace and security in the area. As the Secretary-General stated in his last report, we are therefore called upon to shoulder our responsibilities and to work together to restore hope and to respond to this aspiration for peace.

I am pleased to give the floor to the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: Last June in this Chamber, the members of the Political Committee for the Implementation of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement met with the Security Council to discuss advancing the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Much has changed since last June, and in recent weeks some things, at least, have changed for the better.

First, the parties have been talking to each other at the highest levels, with renewed determination to find a peaceful solution. Secondly, the way has been opened for the Congolese people to take part in the governance of their country and to have a real say in determining their future. Thirdly, a *de facto* cessation of hostilities prevails throughout much of the country.

As the Council and all of the parties are aware, however, great challenges lie ahead which require the will to peace and the ability to implement the commitments made.

Today the Democratic Republic of the Congo is divided by a line of confrontation between the forces of five foreign armies in a line that stretches from Lake Mweru on the Zambian border to the banks of the Ubangi river, the border with the Republic of the Congo. I think that Council members have maps in front of them.

For the last five weeks, calm has descended on that line. In accordance with the plan devised by the Joint Military Commission and approved by the Political Committee, the opposing troops can soon begin to withdraw from their advance positions and take a step back from the line of confrontation. Such a move could be the first step towards an eventual withdrawal of all foreign forces from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Since the Lusaka Agreement was signed in July and August 1999, this has been our common goal. In spite of the obstacles, misunderstandings and delays that have prevented its implementation so far, all of the parties can take a measure of credit for the recent progress. All of the parties remain responsible for seeing this process to its logical, rightful and long-awaited conclusion.

The plan for the disengagement of forces was signed at Harare on 6 December. I have since submitted to the Security Council a concept of operations under which United Nations military personnel would be deployed to monitor and verify the actions taken by the parties in implementing the disengagement plan.

The Council is now ready to endorse that concept, and the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and the Secretariat have already begun to take the necessary steps to put it into practice. Once the Council has finished its discussions here, a date will be set to begin the disengagement and redeployment exercise. The troops can then start drawing back, supervised and monitored by United Nations military observers. The implementation date should be chosen with care — not too late, so as not to lose the momentum already generated, but not before all of the necessary preparations have been put in place to ensure an efficient and transparent operation.

These military movements will take place in a political environment, which, however troubled and volatile, has also shown clear signs of improvement. I welcome the decision of President Kabila's

Government to permit the neutral facilitator, Sir Ketumile Masire, to work with the various Congolese parties in conducting the national dialogue. Without broad political agreement among the Congolese people based on a dialogue leading to free and fair elections, no military solution can bring lasting peace and stability to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In view of the recent positive signs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo peace process, I urge all those donors who have pledged to support the work of the neutral facilitator to move quickly to fulfil their promises. At the same time, I urge the members of the Security Council and the wider international community to provide financial and other support to President Masire's important work.

Before achieving the long-term political goals, however, we must address the humanitarian crisis that still affects large numbers of the Congolese people. At this point, in too many parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, humanitarian assistance workers are being prevented from reaching populations in dire need of aid. At least 2 million people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have been driven from their homes by the fighting. Fewer than half of them receive humanitarian assistance. There may be as many as 16 million people with not enough to eat. More than half of the population lacks access to drinkable water, and almost two-thirds cannot obtain essential medicine.

Finally, the security of neighbouring countries not involved in the war has been placed at risk, not least through flows of refugees as well as armed men fleeing the fighting. I wish to highlight the tragic fact that civilians, especially women and children, have been the principal victims of the fighting. Terrible crimes have been committed against women, including rape as a weapon of war. Children have been inducted into armies and sent to the front. They must be given a chance to build a better future.

The world has been waiting for the parties to this conflict, the parties that signed the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, to prove their determination to end the fighting and lay the foundations for peace and recovery. Only as they do so can the international community and the United Nations materially assist them. We have heard complaints about the slowness of the United Nations to act or the small size of the forces it plans to deploy. But the Governments that contribute

troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations are not convinced that they should risk their soldiers' lives in circumstances where those most responsible are not themselves reliably committed.

We may wish it were otherwise, but these are the facts.

That is why these meetings between the Security Council and the Political Committee are so important. Let us now build on the advances of the past few weeks, the agreements that have been signed and the careful plans that have been made. Let the parties to the conflict show the world that they are willing and able to keep their promises to end the shameful and disastrous conflict and to work reliably with the international community in laying foundations for recovery.

In this connection, I welcome the confirmation by President Kagame to me in a telephone conversation on 19 February of his decision to withdraw his troops from Pweto and pull back all his forces 200 kilometres, in accordance with the Harare disengagement and redeployment plan.

I have instructed my Special Representative, Mr. Morjane, and the Force Commander, General Diallo, who are with us today, to assist in preparing this withdrawal. I hope that this move by Rwanda will help set the tone and lead other parties to take similar steps towards an ultimate withdrawal of all foreign forces from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I am therefore pleased to note the statement issued yesterday by the Ugandan Government that it intends to withdraw two battalions from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This is a further welcome development. The parties should be given a clear message today. Let the disengagement of forces and the inter-Congolese dialogue begin. Draw up plans to bring all foreign forces home from the Democratic Republic of the Congo territory. Work with your neighbours and with us to find innovative and creative ways to resolve the problems of armed groups and border security. These are the outcomes expected from this meeting. I wish you every success in achieving them.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the Secretary-General for his important statement.

I am pleased now to give the floor to the Honourable Stanislaus Mudenge, the Minister for

Foreign Affairs of Zimbabwe and Chairman of the Political Committee.

Mr. Mudenge (Zimbabwe): I wish at the outset to congratulate my old friend, Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani of Singapore, on the excellent manner in which he conducted the work of the Security Council in January and for the invitation he extended to us, on behalf of the Security Council, to come to New York on this occasion. I am at the same time pleased to see Ambassador Saïd Ben Mustapha, a fellow African, presiding over the Council this month, during which the Council will deliberate on many issues of special interest to Africa. We commend the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his unrelenting determination to promote the interest of peace in Africa and the world over.

I have the honour, on behalf of the Political Committee on the implementation of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and on my own behalf, to express our gratitude to the United Nations Security Council for inviting us to interact with it, once again, in this manner on the very pressing issue of restoring peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We are aware of the considerable amount of time and attention that the Council has devoted and is devoting to the resolution of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Only earlier this month, the Council met, separately, the Presidents of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, as part of its efforts to contribute to the resolution of this conflict. We join the Council on this occasion so that together we may not only exchange views on this matter but also agree on the next steps required to support and encourage further progress in the peace process.

The last time a similar meeting between the Political Committee and the Security Council was held, on 15 and 16 June 2000, the process of implementing the Ceasefire Agreement was facing numerous challenges: there were ceasefire violations and fighting in various provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) was experiencing numerous obstacles, and the national dialogue still had to overcome a series of complications. The picture then looked sombre — indeed, some would say downright depressing.

Today, we have a radically transformed situation, one that yields renewed hope and optimism in and for the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The guns have been silent on the front lines for more than three weeks now, and the speedy implementation of the process of disengagement and redeployment of forces, which all the parties have signed on to, could help sustain that silence for an even longer time. MONUC, by its own admission, is enjoying the cooperation of all the parties to the Agreement, and the hitherto thorny issue of the facilitator of the national dialogue has been resolved.

The parties to the Ceasefire Agreement have never tired of meeting and exploring various initiatives to overcome whatever impediments stood in the way of progress in the peace process. The most recent of such meetings of the parties were held in Lusaka on 12 and 15 February 2001 at the Political Committee and summit levels respectively. Beyond reaffirming their commitment to the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement, the parties deliberated on and made significant progress on such critical issues as the disengagement and redeployment of forces and the inter-Congolese political negotiations. All the parties have now signed the sub-plans for disengagement, and the only two that are yet to issue the disengagement orders to their troops are expected to lodge them with the Joint Military Commission (JMC) and MONUC shortly.

The preparations for the inter-Congolese dialogue are set to get underway in earnest any day now, whenever the facilitator, former President Sir Ketumile Masire, visits Kinshasa in response to the invitation extended to him by President Joseph Kabila. In view of the urgency that the parties attach to the commencement of the national dialogue, all the Congolese parties were urged to begin consultations amongst themselves and to cooperate fully with the facilitator.

It is patently evident that the parties continue to take their obligations seriously and wish to take advantage of the current propitious turn of events to move the process even further and in more tangible ways. Both the Political Committee and the summit underlined their desire and determination to accelerate the pace of implementation of the peace process. It is in this frame of mind and with this expectation that we meet with the Security Council today as partners in the search for durable peace in the Democratic Republic of

the Congo. We hope, therefore, that hesitation and doubt will give way to renewed confidence in the peace process and that renewed confidence will translate into timely concrete actions in fulfilment of the responsibilities assigned to the United Nations under the Ceasefire Agreement and in numerous Security Council resolutions on the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We note with some concern in this regard, however, that the United Nations, under the new step-by-step, gradualist and minimalist concept of operations for MONUC, conveys an unfortunate impression of hesitancy and doubt about the peace process. The parties firmly believe that now is the time not for prevarication and doubt, but for rapid engagement in view of the positive prevailing circumstances. The Lusaka summit was unequivocal in its expectation that the United Nations should respond with

"the full and speedy deployment of military observers and related personnel to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as authorized by Security Council resolution 1291 (2000) of 24 February 2000".

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is a vast country. It is necessary that MONUC be allowed to deploy the 5,537 men authorized under resolution 1291 (2000). Cutting the number to under 3,000, as is now being proposed under the new deployment concept, would certainly convey an impression of a lack of seriousness, if not of downright cynicism and a lack of sincerity and of commitment to peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I believe that one of the news agencies yesterday described the figure as "minuscule".

Downsizing the force would be tantamount to amending resolution 1291 (2000) by the back door, through administrative fiat. That would be most unfortunate. We therefore appeal to the Security Council to reconsider the proposed figure for deployment under the new concept. If yesterday there were any doubts as to the sincerity and commitment of the parties to the Ceasefire Agreement, those doubts should now be dispelled. The parties have spoken in a very clear and unambiguous manner: they want peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and they want it now; furthermore, they are prepared to take some risks to attain it. They eagerly invite and await a

commensurate response from the Council, not only in assuming, with the necessary speed, its responsibilities under the Ceasefire Agreement but also in ensuring the full implementation of its own resolutions on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular resolution 1291 (2000).

We now have a unique opportunity to make tangible progress that would firmly set this process on the path to success. This is not the time to imagine that every light at the end of the tunnel in the Congo peace process is necessarily that of an approaching high-speed train. We must seize the moment to make progress. Let the Council increase confidence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo peace process by taking some bold and generous steps. We are not saying that the Council should throw all caution to the wind; what we are urging is that it act urgently and decisively to promote peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and that it be willing to take calculated risks if need be — as it has done in Sierra Leone, as it has done in Kosovo and as it has done in East Timor. We ask the Council to enforce our renewed commitment to the peace process by taking bold and brave decisions: yes, why not inspire us by agreeing here and now to accelerate the implementation of phase III of the United Nations deployment?

We must not let this chance slip away. The Congolese people look with great anticipation to the Council's actions, so that they may enjoy peace and progress as a sovereign and independent people. That is the least we can and must do for our brothers and sisters in the Congo. The Council is called upon to assume its responsibility and lead the way.

I would be remiss in my duty if I did not use this opportunity to appeal to the Security Council to come to the financial assistance of the Joint Military Commission, a key institution in keeping the Lusaka peace process alive. The JMC is in dire financial straits and may have to shut down if assistance is not rendered as a matter of urgency.

Finally, I wish to take note of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2001/128) of 12 February 2001, which covers some important developments since his last report to the Security Council. It contains a great deal of useful information and makes useful recommendations for the consideration of the Council. The Political Committee, for its part, will have an opportunity to comment on and update some aspects of

the report during our official private meetings with the Council later today.

The eyes and the hopes of the Congolese nation are riveted on our proceedings today. We must give hope to the Congolese mothers and children. The situation brooks no delay. Let us all agree that enough is enough. The moment for inaction is past. This conflict chapter must be closed. Peace, yes peace, must return to the Congo.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank The Honourable Stanislaus I. G. Mudenge, Minister for

Foreign Affairs of Zimbabwe and Chairman of the Political Committee, for the kind words he addressed to me and to my country.

There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the official public stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council will continue its consideration of the item at a private meeting which will take place in this Chamber immediately following the present meeting.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.

